

Jeffrey Sneller

Manchester Fire Fighters
Local 1579

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 6194

Good afternoon, my name is Jeffrey Sneller. I live in Andover Connecticut with my wife and three children. I am here today to testify in **favor** of **H.B. 6194 AN ACT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION PRESUMPTIONS FOR FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE OFFICERS AND EMERGENCY RESCUE WORKERS**

I am a career firefighter paramedic with the town of Manchester. I have been on the job for nine years. Before that I was a Volunteer firefighter for a total of fifteen years.

In April of 2005, I began showing signs and having symptoms indicative of testicular cancer. My pre employment physical and subsequent yearly physicals said I was in excellent health. Although my family has no history of cancer, I was to be the first. Twenty-nine years old with a family of three. My doctor said "Oh, you have cancer..."

I underwent surgery followed by intensive chemotherapy. For four months I would be out of work. My sick time would not cover me being off from work for that amount of time. I was also the sole provider for my family. My oncologist said that I would probably be unable to get workers' compensation because I wouldn't be able to tie it to one particular incident. I would not be able to do this even though research has shown that firefighters have a **ONE HUNDRED AND TWO** percent greater risk of developing testicular cancer than the average person. Stang and his colleagues did an incidence study and found that firefighters were **FOUR TIMES** more likely to be afflicted by testicular cancer. Firefighters are also at a much greater risk for numerous other cancers as well. In fact one report states firefighters have **TWICE** the risk of **DYING** from certain types of cancers.

Almost all fires we respond to contain a great number of toxins. From plastics, furniture, building materials, various debris in dumpster fires and so on.

To date there have been over 32 separate studies on the correlation of firefighting and the diagnosis of cancer. The University of Cincinnati, which conducted a meta-analysis of thirty-two studies, that used over **ONE HUNDRED**

THOUSAND firefighters. This study reported a "...direct correlation between the chemical exposures firefighters experience on the job and their increased risk for cancer."

Firefighters are exposed to toxins and multiple carcinogens, while attempting to save lives and reduce property damage.

My brothers and sisters stepped up to the plate and worked my shifts for me for four months. They also held a fundraiser to help with the financial burden. Had it not been for them, my situation would have been much worse. Aside from my illness and health, I would have had no pay check, overdue bills and the inability to fill my shifts.

Currently **THIRTY ONE STATES** and **NEW YORK CITY** as well as **SEVEN OF THE NINE PROVINCES OF CANADA** has legislation that presumes if a firefighter is diagnosed with cancer it is occupationally induced. Included in the 31 are all states surrounding Connecticut.

I believe it is time for Connecticut to step up to the plate, like my brothers and sisters did and provide coverage for us.

Thank you for your time, it means a lot to my family and my fire department family. I would be happy to answer any questions.